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09/847,795	05/02/2001	John C. Goodwin III	9371	4913

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EXAMINER

FISCHER, ANDREW J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 11/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/847,795

Applicant(s)

GOODWIN ET AL.

Examiner

Andrew J. Fischer

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 July 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 and 8-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 and 8-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgements

1. Applicants' amendment filed July 19, 2004 is acknowledged. Accordingly, claims 1-5 and 8-21 remain pending.

2. This Office Action is written in OACS. Because of this, the Examiner is unable to control formatting, paragraph numbering, font, spelling, line spacing, and/or other word processing issues. The Examiner sincerely apologizes for these errors.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §112 2nd Paragraph

3. The following is a quotation of the 2nd paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-5 and 8-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

a. In claim 1, it is unclear what is "a common host computer" Based upon the claim language, it is not known what the computer is in "common" with.

b. Also in claim 1, is "said host computer" the same or different from the "common host computer."

c. Also in claim 1, it is unclear the "and operating to send a message" phrase at the end of claim 1 is part of the "if" conditional phrase described immediately preceding it.

d. In claim 16, it is unclear if "an (EPL)" in line 3 is the same or different from the "(EPL)" in line 2.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. §102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office Action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States. . . .

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1-5 and 8-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Goodwin III (U.S. 5,907,143)(“Goodwin ‘143”). Goodwin ‘143 discloses the claimed invention including EPL, PLUs, a common host computer (32).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office Action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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8. Claims 1-5 and 8-21 are alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodwin '143.¹ It is the Examiner's principle position that the claims are anticipated because an EPL is a form of electronic sign.

However if not inherent, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Goodwin '143 to an additional EPL as an electronic sign. Such a modification would have allowed multiple signs within the same system.

9. With respect to claims 1-5, 8-15, and 21 the Examiner respectfully reminds Applicants that: "A system is an apparatus." *Ex parte Fressola* 27 USPQ2d 1608, 1611 (B.P.A.I. 1993)(citations omitted). Additionally, "[c]laims in apparatus form conventionally fall into the 35 U.S.C. §101 statutory category of a 'machine.'" *Ex parte Donner*, 53 USPQ2d 1699, 1701 (B.P.A.I. 1999)(unpublished), (Paper No. 34, page 5, issued as U.S. Patent 5,999,907). Therefore, it is the Examiner's position that Applicants' system claims are "product," "apparatus," or more specifically, "machine" claims.²

10. In light of the fact that Applicants have chosen to claim product claims, Applicants are also reminded that functional recitations using the word "for," "adapted to," or other functional terms (*e.g.* see claim 1 which recites "for reading an EPL/ES data file") have been considered but are given little patentable weight³ because they fail to add any structural limitations and are

¹ See MPEP §2112 expressly authorizing alternative §102/§103 rejections when the question of inherency is present in the anticipation rejection.

² Products may be either machines, manufactures, or compositions of matter. MPEP §2106 IV B. 2 (a).

³ See *e.g. In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983)(stating that although all limitations must be considered, not all limitations are entitled to patentable weight.).

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thereby regarded as intended use language. A recitation of the intended use in a product claim must result in a structural difference between the claimed product and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed product from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it reads on the claimed limitation. *In re Casey*, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) (“The manner or method in which such machine is to be utilized is not germane to the issue of patentability of the machine itself.”); *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). See also MPEP §§ 2114 and 2115. Unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner, the claim interpretation principles in this paragraph apply to all examined product claims currently pending.

11. Regarding conditional phrases (*e.g.* claim 1 recites “said host computer operating to send a message to the ES which includes a command for the ES to display the promotional message if the identification number is associated with the ES”), Applicants are reminded that such phrases are not necessarily limiting. “Language that suggest or makes optional but does not require steps to be performed or does not limit a claim to a particular structure does not limit the scope of a claim or claim limitation. [Emphasis in original.]” MPEP §2106 II C. If greater weight is desired, the Examiner suggest (by way of example only) positively reciting the claimed phrase by removing the “for” and other intended use statements.

12. The Examiner concludes that Applicants have decided not to be their own lexicographer by indicating and defining claim limitations to have meanings other than their ordinary and accustomed meanings. To support this position, the Examiner relies on the following factual findings. First and as noted in the previous Office Action,⁴ the Examiner has carefully reviewed

⁴ See the Examiner’s previous Office Action mailed March 18, 2004, Paragraph No. 10.

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the specification and prosecution history and can not locate any lexicographic definition(s).

Second, the Examiner finds that not only have Applicants not pointed to definitional statements in their specification or prosecution history, Applicants have also not pointed to a term or terms in a claim with which to draw in those statements⁵ with the required clarity, deliberateness, and precision.⁶ Third, after receiving express notice in the previous Office Action of the Examiner's position that lexicography is not invoked,⁷ Applicants have not pointed out the "supposed errors" in the Examiner's position regarding lexicography invocation in accordance with 37 C.F.R.

§1.111(b) (*i.e.* Applicants have not argued lexicography is invoked). Finally and to be sure of Applicants' intent, the Examiner also notes that Applicants have declined the Examiner's express invitation⁸ to be their own lexicographer.⁹ Accordingly and for due process purposes, the

⁵ "In order to overcome this heavy presumption in favor of the ordinary meaning of claim language, it is clear that a party wishing to use statements in the written description to confine or otherwise affect a patent's scope must, *at the very least*, point to a term or terms in the claim with which to draw in those statements. [Emphasis added.]" *Johnson Worldwide Assocs. v. Zebco Corp.*, 175 F.3d 985, 989, 50 USPQ2d 1607, 1610 (Fed. Cir. 1999).

⁶ "The patentee's lexicography must, of course, appear 'with reasonable clarity, deliberateness, and precision' before it can affect the claim." *Renishaw PLC v. Marposs Societa' per Azioni*, 158 F.3d 1243, 1249, 48 USPQ2d 1117, 1121 (Fed. Cir. 1998) citing *In re Paulsen*, 30 F.3d 1475, 1480, 31 USPQ2d 1671, 1674 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

⁷ See again the Examiner's previous Office Action mailed March 18, 2004, Paragraph No. 10.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ The Examiner's requirements on this matter were reasonable on at least two separate and independent grounds. First, the Examiner's requirements were simply an express request for clarification of how Applicants intend their claims to be interpreted so that lexicography (or even an *attempt* at lexicography) by Applicants was not inadvertently overlooked by the Examiner. Second, the requirements were reasonable in view of the USPTO's goals of compact prosecution, productivity with particular emphasis on reductions in both pendency and cycle time, and other goals as outlined in the USPTO's The 21st Century Strategic Plan, February 3,

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Examiner gives notice that for the remainder of the examination process (and unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner), the heavy presumption in favor of the ordinary and accustomed meaning is not overcome; the claims therefore continue to be interpreted with their “broadest reasonable interpretation” *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1997).¹⁰ The Examiner now relies heavily and extensively on this interpretation.¹¹ Unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner, the preceding claim interpretation principles in this paragraph apply to all examined claims currently pending.

13. To the extent that the Examiner’s interpretations are in dispute with Applicants’ interpretations, the Examiner hereby adopts the following definitions—under the broadest reasonable interpretation standard—in all his claim interpretations.¹² Moreover, while the following list is provided in accordance with *In re Morris*, the definitions are a guide to claim

2003 available at www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/strat21/index.htm (last accessed October 31, 2004).

¹⁰ See also *In re Bass*, 314 F.3d 575, 577, 65 USPQ2d 1156, 1158 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (“In examining a patent claim, the PTO must apply the broadest reasonable meaning to the claim language, taking into account any definitions presented in the specification. Words in a claim are to be given their ordinary and accustomed meaning unless the inventor chose to be his own lexicographer in the specification”) (citations omitted); *In re Etter*, 756 F.2d 852, 858, 225 USPQ 1, 5 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (en banc); and MPEP §§ 2111 and 2111.01.

¹¹ See 37 C.F.R. §1.104(c)(3) which states in part: “the examiner may rely upon admissions by applicant . . . as to *any matter* affecting patentability [Emphasis added.]”

¹² While most definitions are cited because these terms are found in the claims, the Examiner may have provided additional definitions to help interpret words, phrases, or concepts found in the definitions themselves or in the prior art.

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terminology since claim terms must be interpreted in context of the surrounding claim language.¹³ Finally, the following list is not intended to be exhaustive in any way:

Computer: “Any machine that does three things: accepts structured input, processes it according to prescribed rules, and produces the results as output.” Computer Dictionary, 3rd Edition, Microsoft Press, Redmond, WA, 1997.¹⁴ **Client:** “3. On a local area network or Internet, a computer that accesses shared network resources provided by another computer (called a server).” *Id.* **Server** “2. On the Internet or other network, a computer or program that responds to commands from a client.” *Id.*

Data “Plural of the Latin datum, meaning an item of information. In practice, data is often used for the singular as well as plural the form of the noun.” *Id.*

Database “A file composed of records, each containing fields together with a set of operations for searching, sorting, recombining and other functions.” *Id.*

File “A complete, named collection of information, such as a program, a set of data used by a program, or a user-created document. A file is the basic unit of storage that enables a computer to distinguish one set of information from another.” *Id.*

¹³ See e.g. *Brookhill-Wilk I LLC v. Intuitive Surgical Inc.*, 334 F.3d 1294, 1300, 67 USPQ2d 1132, 1137 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (abstract dictionary definitions are not alone determinative; “resort must always be made to the surrounding text of the claims in question”).

¹⁴ Based upon Applicants’ disclosure, the art of record, and the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in this art as determined by the factors discussed in MPEP §2141.03 (where practical), the Examiner finds that the *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary* is an appropriate technical dictionary known to be used by one of ordinary skill in this art. See e.g. *Altiris Inc. v. Symantec Corp.*, 318 F.3d 1363, 1373, 65 USPQ2d 1865, 1872 (Fed. Cir. 2003) where the Federal Circuit used the *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary* (3d ed.) as “a technical dictionary” to define the term “flag.” See also *In re Barr*, 444 F.2d 588, 170 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1971) (noting that its appropriate to use technical dictionaries in order to ascertain the meaning of a term of art) and MPEP §2173.05(a) titled ‘New Terminology.’

Record “A data structure that is a collection of fields (elements), each with its own name and type. Unlike an array, whose elements all represent the same type of information and are accessed using an index, the elements of a record represent different types of information and are accessed by name. A record can be accessed as a collective unit of elements, or the elements can be accessed individually.” *Id.*

Relational Model “A data model in which the data is organized in relations (tables). This is the model implemented in most modern database management systems.” *Id.*

Relational Database “A database or database management system that stores information in tables—rows and columns of data—and conducts searches by using data in specified columns of one table to find additional data in another table. In a relational database, the rows of a table represent records (collections of information about separate items) and the columns represent fields (particular attributes of a record). In conducting searches, a relational database matches information from a field in one table with information in a corresponding field of another table to produce a third table that combines requested data from both tables. . . . Microcomputer database products typically are relational databases. *Compare* flat-file database, inverted-list database.” *Id.* **Table** “1. In programming, a data structure usually consisting of a list of entries, each entry being identified by a unique key and containing a set of related values. A table is often implemented in an array of records, a linked list, or (in more primitive languages) several arrays of different data types all using a common indexing scheme. 2. In relational databases, a data structure characterized by rows and columns, with data occupying or potentially occupying each cell formed by a row-column intersection. The table is the underlying structure of a relation.” *Id.*

Response to Arguments

14. Applicant's arguments filed July 19, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Prior Art

15. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

Lexicography

16. Applicants' response regarding lexicography is acknowledged. While the Examiner respectfully disagrees, Applicants' traversal is noted for the record. As best can be determined, it appears Applicants are interpreting the claims as if this were in inter partes infringement lawsuit instead of ex parte examination.

17. First, the Examiner has never *required* Applicants to be there own lexicographer. It is Applicants' burden to define their invention, not the Examiner's.¹⁵ In complying this burden, Applicants are reminded that it is Applicants—and *not* the Examiner—who drafted the claims, specification, and drawings and it is therefore *Applicants* who must decide whether or not to be their own lexicographer.¹⁶ Along the same line of reasoning, whether or not Applicants choose

¹⁵ *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d at 1056, 44 USPQ2d at 1029 (quoting 35 U.S.C. §112 2nd paragraph, "It is the applicants' burden to precisely define the invention, not the PTO's.")).

¹⁶ See e.g. *Lear Siegler, Inc. v. Aeroquip Corp.*, 733 F.2d 881, 221 USPQ 1025, 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (noting that "It is the inventor applying for a patent who is permitted to be his own lexicographer," not the examiner).

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this or that particular method of claim construction (*e.g.* lexicography or perhaps 35 U.S.C. §112 6th paragraph) is also completely within Applicants' discretion.

18. Second, Applicants are reminded that claim terminology is fixed upon filing. See *Middleton Inc. v. Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co.*, 311 F.3d 1384, 1389, 65 USPQ2d 1138, 1142 (Fed. Cir. 2002) ("The meaning of a patent term, however, is not subject to revision The meaning of patent terms depends on the usage of those terms in context by one of skill in the art *at the time of application*. [Emphasis added.]"); *Wiener v. NEC Elecs., Inc.*, 102 F.3d 534, 539, 41 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1996) ("Ultimately, a court must construe the claim language according to the standard of what those words would have meant to one skilled in the art *as of the application date*. [Emphasis added.]")(overruled on other grounds in *Cybor Corp. v. FAS Techs., Inc.*, 138 F.3d 1448, 1454-55, 46 USPQ2d 1169, 1173 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (en banc)); *Plant Genetic Systems N.V. v. DeKalb Genetics Corp.*, 315 F.3d 1335, 1345, 65 USPQ2d 1452, 1460 (Fed. Cir. 2003)("We hold that the district court did not ignore the plain meaning of the claims, but properly gave objective meaning to them as they were understood *at the time the patent application was filed*. [Emphasis added.]"); *Kopykake Enterprises Inc. v. Lucks Co.*, 264 F.3d 1377, 1383, 60 USPQ2d 1124, 1127 (Fed. Cir. 2001) ("[W]hen a claim term understood to have a narrow meaning when the application is filed later acquires a broader definition, the literal scope of the term is limited to what it was understood to mean *at the time of filing*. [Emphasis added.]"); and *In re Bass*, 314 F.3d 575, 577-78, 65 USPQ2d 1156, 1158 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (noting that "Bass chose to define 'motorized sports boat' in the specification. He cannot change or modify that definition on appeal.").

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19. So once an applicant files his or her specification, the meaning of *all* claim terms—both lexicographic and non-lexicographic—are fixed. While the meaning may be ‘uncovered,’ ‘corralled,’ or ascertained during either ex parte examination or inter partes litigation,¹⁷ the meaning of claim terms nevertheless remains fixed. It is self evident that failure to construe a claim during either ex parte examination or inter partes litigation does not change the fact that the meaning of claim terms is fixed upon filing. And terms or definitions that actually *change* claim meaning by their inclusion *after* filing the filing date of the application are improper under either 35 U.S.C. §112 1st paragraph and/or 35 U.S.C. §132 since it is axiomatic that any *change* from an initial meaning would clearly constitute new matter.

20. Third, the Examiner recognizes that drafting patent applications is a complicated process requiring the drafter to consider many complex issues.¹⁸ However this does not relieve the drafter of deciding whether or not to be their own lexicographer and if affirmative, unequivocally stating those definitions in the specification. Such definitions and associated issues must be contemplated *prior to* filing the patent application. See *Intellicall, Inc. v. Phonometrics, Inc.*, 952 F.2d 1384, 21 USPQ2d 1383 (Fed. Cir. 1992) noting that for lexicography and quoting *Lear*, “the place to do so is in the specification of the inventor’s application, and the time to do so is *prior to* that application acquiring its own independent life as a technical disclosure through its

¹⁷ See e.g. *Jack Gluttman, Inc. v. Kopykake Enterprises, Inc.*, 302 F.3d 1352, 1360, 64 USPQ2d 1302, 1307 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (“Where, as here, the patentee has clearly defined a claim term, that definition usually is dispositive; it is the single best guide to the meaning of a disputed term.”).

¹⁸ See e.g. *Johnson & Johnston Associates*, 285 F.3d at 1069, 62 USPQ2d at 1241, Newman, J., dissenting (“Patentees often must draw lines in order to claim their invention with specificity.”).

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issuance as a United States patent. [Emphasis added.]” *Intellicall*, 952 F.2d at 1388, 21 USPQ2d at 1386.

21. Applicants are also reminded that the USPTO has the authority to set reasonable deadlines or requirements. “The PTO is the administrative agency that is ‘responsible for the granting and issuing of patents’ 35 U.S.C. §2 (2000). Like other administrative agencies, the PTO may impose reasonable deadlines and requirements on parties that appear before it. The PTO has inherent authority to govern procedure before the PTO, and that authority allows it to set reasonable deadlines and requirements for the prosecution of applications.” *In re Bogese*, 303 F.3d 1362, 1367-68, 64 USPQ2d 1448, 1452 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (footnote omitted). Although *Bogese* concerned latches, the concept of imposing reasonable deadlines and requirements upon applicants is pervasive at the USPTO and is generally accepted as a requirement of 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b).¹⁹

22. Having established that claim terms are fixed upon filing, that Applicants are the masters of their domain, and that the USPTO can set reasonable deadlines or requirements, the Examiner has simply required that if Applicants *know of or intended* to be their own lexicographer, the

¹⁹ For additional guidance on how the USPTO interprets 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) see *e.g.*: MPEP §818.03(a) quoting §1.111(b) and noting that applicant is required to point out the supposed errors in the next response by stating *why* the Examiner’s position regarding restriction is *substantively* incorrect in order to preserve his or her right to petition; MPEP §2144.03 regarding Official Notice noting that traversal must be made in applicant’s *next response*. “A seasonable challenge constitutes a demand for evidence made as soon as practicable during prosecution. Thus, applicant is charged with rebutting the well know statement *in the next reply* after the Office action in which the well known statement is made. [Emphasis added.]” Failure to seasonable challenge the official noticed statement *in the very next response* means the statement is interpreted as admitted prior art; and *In re Goodman*, 3 USPQ2d 1866, 1871 (ComrPats 1987) noting the examiners have no authority to waive 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) and that an applicant is required to point out *any* supposed errors in his next response.

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Examiner respectfully requested that they point it out now. After the Examiner has brought this issue to Applicants' attention and after the Examiner has shown reliance on the *lack* of lexicographic definition(s) to interpret the claims, Applicants' continued failure to point out any *known* lexicographic definition(s) would be a violation of 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b), and perhaps, Applicants' duty of candor and good faith under 37 C.F.R. §1.56 which states in part: "(a) ... Each individual associated with the filing and prosecution of a patent application has a duty of candor and good faith in dealing with the Office" In any event, one point however is clear, such comments by Applicants unmistakably confirm that Applicants have received notice of the Examiner's factual findings and legal conclusions regarding lexicography invocation and have been given the opportunity to defend against the noticed liabilities.

Conclusion

23. Applicants' amendment necessitated the new grounds of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP §706.07(a). Applicants are reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

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however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

24. References considered pertinent to Applicants' disclosure are listed on form PTO-892.

25. The following two (2) citations to the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure ("MPEP") apply to this Office Action: MPEP citations to Chapters 100, 200, 500, 600, 700, 1000, 1100, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1700, 1800, 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500, 2600, and 2700 are from the MPEP 8th Edition, Rev. 2, May 2004. All remaining MPEP citations are from MPEP 8th Edition, August 2001.

26. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

27. In accordance with *In re Lee*, 277 F.3d 1338, 1344-45, 61 USPQ2d 1430, 1434-35 (Fed. Cir. 2002), the Examiner finds that the references How Computers Work Millennium Ed. by Ron White. and How Networks Work, Millennium Ed. by Frank J. Derfler et. al. are additional evidence of what is basic knowledge or common sense to one of ordinary skill in this art. Each reference is cited in its entirety. Moreover, because these two references are directed towards beginners (see e.g. "User Level Beginning . . ."), because of the references' basic content (which is self-evident upon review of the references), and after further review of the entire application and all the art now of record in conjunction with the factors as discussed in MPEP §2141.03

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(where practical), the Examiner finds that these two references are primarily directed towards those of low skill in this art. Because these two references are directed towards those of low skill in this art, the Examiner finds that one of ordinary skill in this art must—at the very least—be aware of and understand the knowledge and information contained within these three references.

28. Also in accordance with *In re Lee*, the Examiner finds that the Borland's Paradox for Windows User's Guide is additional evidence of what is basic knowledge or common sense to one of ordinary skill in this art. This reference is cited in its entirety. Paradox for Windows User's Guide exemplifies a typical relational database system. Because of the reference's basic content (which is self-evident upon examination of the reference) and after further review of the entire record including the prior art now of record in conjunction with the factors as discussed in MPEP §2141.03 (where practical), the Examiner finds that the Paradox for Windows User's Guide is primarily directed towards those of low skill in this art. Because the reference is directed towards those of low skill in this art, the Examiner finds that one of ordinary skill in this art must—at the very least—be aware of and understand the knowledge and information contained within the reference.

29. Because this application is now final, Applicants are reminded of the USPTO's after final practice as discussed in MPEP §714.12 and §714.13 and that entry of amendments after final is *not* a matter of right. "The refusal of an examiner to enter an amendment after final rejection of claims is a matter of discretion." *In re Berger*, 279 F.3d 975, 984, 61 USPQ2d 1523, 1529 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (citations omitted). Furthermore, suggestions or examples of claim language provided by the Examiner are just that—suggestions or examples—and do not constitute a formal requirement mandated by the Examiner. Unless stated otherwise by an express indication that a

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claim is “allowed,” exemplary claim language provided by the Examiner to overcome a particular rejection or to change claim interpretation has *not been addressed* with respect to other aspects of patentability (e.g. §101 patentable subject matter, §112 1st paragraph written description and enablement, §112 2nd paragraph indefiniteness, and §102 and §103 prior art).

Therefore, any claim amendment submitted under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 that incorporates an Examiner suggestion or example or simply changes claim interpretation will nevertheless require further consideration and/or search and a patentability determination as noted above.

30. In accordance with the USPTO’s goals of customer service, compact prosecution, and reduction of cycle time, the Examiner has made every effort to clarify his position regarding claim interpretation and any rejections or objections in this application. Furthermore, the Examiner has again provided Applicants with notice—for due process purposes—of his position regarding his factual determinations and legal conclusions. The Examiner notes and thanks Applicants for their “Remarks” (beginning on page 6) traversing the Examiner’s positions on various points. If Applicants disagree with any additional factual determination or legal conclusion made by the Examiner in this Office Action whether expressly stated or implied,²⁰ the Examiner respectfully reminds Applicants to properly traverse the Examiner’s position(s) in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) in their next properly filed response. By addressing these issues now, matters where the Examiner and Applicants agree can be eliminated allowing the Examiner and Applicants to focus on areas of disagreement (if any) with the goal towards allowance in the shortest possible time. If Applicants have any questions regarding the Examiner’s positions or have other questions regarding this communication or even previous

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communications, Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Examiner Andrew J. Fischer whose telephone number is (703) 305-0292. If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's immediate supervisor, Robert Olszewski, can be reached at (703) 308-5183. The fax number for facsimile responses is now (703) 872-9306.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. J. Fischer" followed by the date "10/31/04". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew J. Fischer
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3627

AJF
October 31, 2004

²⁰ *E.g.*, if the Examiner rejected a claim under §103 with two references, although not directly stated, it is the Examiner's implied position that the references are analogous art.